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CLAIM AMENDMENTS:

Please amend the claims as follows so that a listing of the entire set of pending claims 1-22 is submitted herewith per 37 C.F.R. §1.121.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of selecting a test system in a distributed network environment, comprising the steps of:

determining, at a management server, a target test system description, the target test system description associated with a software test;

receiving, at the management server, the test system description, the test system description associated with a functioning system in the distributed network environment;

comparing, at the management server, the target test system description to a test system descriptions list;

selecting a test system description from the test system descriptions list that matches the target test system description; and

contacting a selected test system, the selected test system associated with the selected test system description.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising:

receiving, at the management server, the software test associated with the target test system description.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 further comprising:

forwarding, from the management server, the software test, to the selected test system; and

executing the software test at the selected test system.

4. (Cancelled)

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5. (Cancelled)
6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[4]] 1 further comprising:
adding the test system description to the test system descriptions list.
7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim [[4]] 1 further comprising:
communicating with the functioning system at a management agent;
determining at least one characteristic of the functioning system at the
management agent; and
creating the test system description based on the at least one characteristic.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the test system descriptions list
comprises test system descriptions selected from the group consisting of:
descriptions of fully functioning test systems, descriptions of heterogeneous
test systems, descriptions of test systems used to balance a network workload, descriptions of
test systems used during specific usage periods, and descriptions of test systems compatible
with a particular test.

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9. (Currently Amended) Computer program product in a computer usable medium for selecting a test system in a distributed network environment, comprising:

means for determining, at a management server, a target test system description, the target test system description associated with a software test;
means for receiving, at the management server, the test system description, the test system description associated with a functioning system in the distributed network environment;

means for comparing, at the management server, the target test system description to a test system descriptions list;

means for selecting a test system description from the test system descriptions list that matches the target test system description; and

means for contacting a selected test system, the selected test system associated with the selected test system description.

10. (Original) The product of claim 9 further comprising:

means for receiving, at the management server, the software test associated with the target test system description.

11. (Original) The product of claim 10 further comprising:

means for forwarding, from the management server, the software test, to the selected test system; and

means for executing the software test at the selected test system.

12. (Cancelled)

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13. (Cancelled)
14. (Currently Amended) The product of claim [[12]] 9 further comprising:
means for adding the test system description to the test system descriptions
list.
15. (Currently Amended) The product of claim [[12]] 9 further comprising:
means for communicating with the functioning system at a management
agent;
means for determining at least one characteristic of the functioning system at
the management agent; and
means for creating the test system description based on the at least one
characteristic.
16. (Currently Amended) A system for selecting a test system in a distributed
network environment, comprising:
means for determining, at a management server, a target test system
description, the target test system description associated with a software test;
means for receiving, at the management server, the test system description, the
test system description associated with a functioning system in the distributed network
environment;
means for comparing, at the management server, the target test system
description to a test system descriptions list;
means for selecting a test system description from the test system descriptions
list that matches the target test system description; and
means for contacting a selected test system, the selected test system associated
with the selected test system description.

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17. (Original) The system of claim 16 further comprising:
means for receiving, at the management server, the software test associated with the target test system description.
means for forwarding, from the management server, the software test, to the selected test system; and
means for executing the software test at the selected test system.
18. (Cancelled)
19. (Cancelled)
20. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~[[18]]~~ 16 further comprising:
means for adding the test system description to the test system descriptions list.
21. (Currently Amended) The system of claim ~~[[18]]~~ 16 further comprising:
means for communicating with the functioning system at a management agent;
means for determining at least one characteristic of the functioning system at the management agent; and
means for creating the test system description based on the at least one characteristic.